

Launched in 1994, HUD's Continuum of Care (CoC) approach helped communities across America address the problems of homelessness in a coordinated, comprehensive and strategic fashion. A CoC is a community's plan to organize and deliver housing and services that meet the specific needs of homeless individuals and families as they move toward stable housing and maximum self-sufficiency:

- Outreach, intake and assessment to identify an individual's or family's service and housing needs and link them to appropriate housing or service resources.
- Emergency shelter and safe, decent alternatives to the streets.
- Transitional housing with supportive services to help people develop the skills necessary to live in permanent housing.
- Permanent housing and permanent supportive housing.

Every CoC should also feature homelessness prevention strategies and services, which can range from one-time emergency funds that keep a roof over a family's head to crisis intervention services for people with mental illness.

Overcoming the myriad of problems associated with homelessness also requires long-range commitments of time and effort. In fact, the CoC plan calls for specific steps:

- Establish a planning process to develop a CoC strategy that will identify the core working group, roles and responsibilities, the desired outcomes and the geographic area.
- Collect needs data and inventory system capacity, a process that will outline a community's existing capacity to serve homeless people
- Determine and prioritize gaps in the CoC , by organization data , conducting a gaps analysis and establishing a community process for determining relative priorities.
- Develop short-term and long-term strategic goals, which will include linking gaps to possible resources, assigning responsibilities to specific participants and adopting a written a CoC plan.
- Implement Action Steps to complete the goals of the CoC plan, including an evaluation and monitoring process.

### **The CoC serves two main purposes**

1. It is a strategic plan to address the use of HUD resources and their interface with other

funding sources developed through a community-based process to address homelessness based on: the identified needs of homeless individuals and families; the availability and accessibility of existing housing and services; and the opportunities for linkages with non-homeless mainstream housing and service resources. Through the CoC planning process, a community can:

- Identify the size and scope of the homeless problem;
- Inventory the resources available in the community to address the problem of homelessness, including both homeless resources and non-homeless targeted housing and service resources (referred to as “mainstream” resources);
- Rank the community’s need in order of priority
- Strategically plan the range of services and housing that should be implemented to address homelessness; and
- Identify available leveraging resources that can be used to address homelessness.

- It is an **application** to HUD for McKinney Homeless Assistance resources; this is called the Exhibit One. These resources are invaluable in providing housing and supportive services for people who are homeless. These funds are made available through a national competition announced each year in HUD’s notice of Funding Availability (known as the HUD NOFA).

## Resources

- [CoC Contacts](#)
- [CoC Maps](#)
- [CoC Reports](#) (Point-in-time, Housing Inventory, etc.)
- [CoC Grant Awards](#)
- [Homeless Point-in-Time Count-2012 Preliminary Data](#)